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7 ABSTRACT

8 A dynamic cervical plate has a ratchet and pawl mechanism that allows the cervical plate to
9 post operatively shorten the length of the plate and maintain compression between adjacent
10 vertebrae. The plate has an elongated shaft with teeth on one surface and a groove along each
11 longitudinal edge. A lateral bar is attached on one end of the shaft. The bar has screw holes for
12 connecting with the head of a spinal screw. Another lateral bar is slidably engaged in the
13 longitudinal grooves along the shaft and has a spring clip acting as a pawl with the teeth on the
14 shaft. The sliding bar has screw holes on each side of the shaft. The clip is configured to span
15 the screw holes to prevent screws from backing out of the holes.